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Overview

This bill makes changes related to the regulation of nonemergency medical transportation services, and payment for these services under MA. The bill requires NEMT providers to pay an annual fee to the Commissioner of Transportation, and modifies procedures for granting variances. The bill also specifies and increases payment rates for the various modes of service, eliminates rate reductions for NEMT and ambulance services, and revises and restructures provisions governing the provision of NEMT services under MA.

Section

- 1 **Definitions.** Amends § 174.29, subd. 1. Provides a definition of “nonemergency medical transportation provider.”
- 2 **Other standards; wheelchair securement; protected transport.** Amends § 174.30, subd. 3. Requires the commissioner of transportation to ensure, during inspections, that the safety features of vehicles designated as protected transport are in working order.
- 3 **Vehicle and equipment inspection; rules; decal; complaint contact information; restrictions on name of service.** Amends § 174.30, subd. 4. The amendment to paragraph (d) requires a decal to be issued to nonemergency medical transportation (NEMT) providers. A new paragraph (e) requires NEMT and special transportation service providers to pay an annual fee of \$45 to obtain a decal. Appropriates fees collected to the commissioner to pay for administering the NEMT and special transportation service programs. A new paragraph (g) allows NEMT providers to use the phrase “nonemergency medical transportation” in their names or in advertisements or service descriptions.

Section

4 Variance from standards. Amends § 174.30, by adding subd. 4b. Allows a NEMT provider not subject to Department of Transportation standards prior to July 1, 2014, to apply for a variance if the provider cannot meet the standards within three months of the enactment date of this subdivision. Provides that the commissioner may grant or deny the application, and that variances shall not exceed 60 days.

5 Transportation costs. Amends § 256B.0625, subd. 17. The amendment to paragraph (i) provides that the local agency shall be the single administrative agency and shall administer and reimburse for service modes, when the commissioner has developed, made available, and funded the Web-based single administrative structure, assessment tool, and level of need assessment. It also clarifies that the financial obligation of the local agency is limited to the amount of state and federal funds provided.

A new paragraph (l) requires payments for NEMT to be based on the client's assessed mode. Sets NEMT base payment and mileage rates for the various service modes, as follows:

- up to 80 percent of the IRS rate for client mileage reimbursement
- up to 200 percent of the IRS rate for volunteer transport
- equivalent to the standard fare for unassisted transport when provided by public transit, and \$11 base rate and \$1.30 per mile when provided by an NEMT provider
- \$13 base rate and \$1.30 per mile for assisted transport
- \$18 base rate and \$1.55 per mile for lift-equipped/ramp transport
- \$75 base rate and \$2.40 per mile for protected transport
- \$60 base rate and \$2.40 per mile for stretcher transport, and \$9 per trip for an additional attendant

These rates result in increases in base and mileage rates for most service modes.

A new paragraph (m) extends the higher rural urban commuting area (RUCA) rates to all service modes.

Eliminates a 4.5 percent reduction in payment rates for nonemergency medical transportation, by striking paragraph (o) of current law.

Also makes a large number of conforming and clarifying changes.

6 Payment for ambulance services. Amends § 256b.0625, subd. 17a. Eliminates a 4.5 percent reduction in payment rates for ambulance services.

7 Access to medical services. Amends § 256B.0625, subd. 18a. Strikes language setting MA payment rates for direct mileage for recipients. (Payment rates for mileage are now set in section 256B.0625, subd. 17, paragraph (l)).

8 Single administrative structure and delivery system. Amends § 256B.0625, subd. 18e. Requires the commissioner of human services to coordinate implementation of the single administrative structure and delivery system for NEMT with the commissioner of transportation.

Section

- 9** **Application for and terms of variance.** Amends Laws 2014, chapter 312, article 24, section 45, subd. 2. Provides that variances from special transportation service operating standards expire on the earlier of February 1, 2016, or “one year after the date the variance was issued,” instead of the earlier of February 1, 2016, or the date the commissioner begins certifying new providers. Prohibits the commissioner from granting variances after June 30, 2015.